

21 February 1963

SUBJECT: Chronology of the Soviet Troop Build-up in Cuba

1. On 1 July 1962, shortly before the Soviet build-up began, we estimated that about 500 bloc advisors and technicians were in Cuba. This estimate was based on the extent of the training programs in progress and Soviet practice in other countries like Egypt and Indonesia.

2. When the build-up began our figures rose progressively as new weapons were introduced into Cuba. By 1 August we had estimated that about 2,000 troops were in Cuba and by mid-September this number had increased to 4,000. We knew that additional military personnel had come into Cuba on cargo ships, but could estimate only on a loose scale of minimums and maximums that more than the established 4,000 had entered Cuba by this manner.

3. Discovery of the strategic weapons systems being deployed to Cuba on 14 October naturally dictated a change in our methodology. We first reached a rough estimate that a minimum of 8,000 to 10,000 troops would be required to man these systems. During the period immediately following 14 October, our principal concern was with these strategic weapons rather than the actual numbers of Soviet military personnel.

4. "We were, however, accumulating a mass of additional information from many sources. As time permitted detailed analysis, we progressively raised our estimate until we now believe there were about 22,000 Soviet military personnel in Cuba at the height of the build-up. (Apparently the passenger ships were troop-loaded to as much as three times the known passenger capacity, and substantial numbers arrived in the holds of cargo ships.) This figure included the four armored groups which were first identified in November.

5. Some 5,000 Soviets departed in November and December, so that our present estimate is that about 17,000 remain.